

ENCUENTROS



*Composing Opera:
A Backstage Visit to
the Composer's Workshop*

Lecture by

Daniel Catán

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COMPOSING OPERA: A BACKSTAGE VISIT TO THE COMPOSER'S WORKSHOP*

By Daniel Catán

for José Cuélli

It gives me great pleasure to have the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon, especially in the context of this wonderful environment. The title of my lecture mentions a backstage visit to the composer's workshop, and that is precisely where I intend to take you.

So I will start very simply; but we don't have to start at the beginning. We will get there slowly, anyhow. I would prefer to start with *Florencia en el Amazonas*, my most recent opera.

Of all my three operas, this was certainly the most enjoyable one to write. From the start, which is finding a libretto to work on, it was a happy experience. But, first of all, how did I decide on the subject? How did I go about composing it? And how on earth did I get to the Amazon?

In 1994 I had just had a very successful performance in San Diego, California, of *Rappaccini's Daughter*, my second opera, and there were some aspects of it that I was eager to continue exploring. I can name one of them in particular: the garden music. In order to capture the

essential magic of that garden, I had to allow my imagination to run freely; I needed to write music that was seductive, glittering, mesmerizing. So I developed a way of writing for the orchestra, the woodwinds in particular, that seemed to me to capture the feel of that magical garden. Wishing to continue exploring this kind of writing, I started to look for a subject that would allow me to pursue these magical sounds. And here I have to make a small digression, for I have to talk to you about my dear friend, Alvaro Mutis.

Although he was born in Colombia, we Mexicans have had the benefit of his presence for over twenty years. My life in particular has been greatly enriched by him and his writings. Mutis knows the jungle intimately and has written about it all his life; at the same time he is a great lover of opera. The combination could not be better.

We met many times at his home. The studio, where our meetings took place, is the most inspiring room: four walls covered, from floor to ceiling, with all the literature one could ever dream of reading.

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All of it is there, at the reach of one's hand. The atmosphere of this room emanates intelligence and inner peace; the air blends the smells of wood, leather and the ink of the printed page. Prints of magnificent river boats occupy the spaces normally reserved for family photographs. A small window lets in just enough natural light to make one aware of whether it is night or day.

As I think back to those meetings, I realize that my journey down the Amazon started in that room. It was there that I learned about the dangers of river navigation, the formation of sand banks and how to detect them before it is too late, the swelling of the river, the loose trunks that can get jammed in the wheel and split the boat in half. It was there too that I learned about the psychological states the Amazon induces in its travelers; the way it conjures up their most secret desires and deepest fears.

The jungle is frightening because it forces you onto yourself, to confront your worse fears. The jungle becomes a projection of your state of mind, your state of heart. On the other hand, nothing is more overwhelming than daybreak in the jungle: the calls of birds and insects slowly weaving the most fantastic tapestry of sound, the resplendent freshness of the greenery, the astonishing shapes and colors of some flowers, the size of the sun. These elements acted so powerfully in my imagination that within minutes I became a confirmed pantheist.

It didn't take long before it all fell into place. And when it did, I was so excited

that I could hardly sit still. The magic garden of my previous opera opened out in my mind and transformed itself into the Amazon jungle. I felt as if I had walked through the garden, opened up the gates and stepped into the most fantastic of all worlds. Musically it made sense in a similar sort of way: the music I had imagined for Rappaccini's garden now started to grow and develop into the most varied orchestral colors. I began to imagine lovely musical interludes: a starry night with the silhouette of the boat against the sky and the whispering music of the jungle at night. I heard a marvelous fresh green dawn accompanied by the glittering music of harps and marimba; and then the sun, rising from the river, a colossal orange created by the most radiant and playful of gods.

I had found the setting for my new opera and could hear the kind of music I wanted to write. Every thought, every image of the Amazon suggested timbres, rhythms, melodies. Around that time, I discovered an African drum called a *djembe* that produces the most remarkable sound. It can capture the crisp rhythms of the tropical rain as well as the deepest rumbles of a fearful storm. I decided to include one in the orchestra, maybe two. I also came across the steel drum, that ingenious instrument used in Caribbean music. I had to have one too.

I thought of the marimba, its luscious wooden sounds and the way they would combine with flutes, clarinets and harp. The sonorities of these instruments seemed to me to capture the sound of the

river, the way it changes its timbre as it flows, transforming everything in its path. I was desperate to start, but wait: what about the passengers? Who was going to be traveling on this boat? Up until now I had been imagining myself on it, writing music happily away as the sights went by. Now I had to get myself off the boat and make room for the travelers. But first I had to find them.

How does an opera composer find his characters? At the beginning, it feels like looking for someone you know nothing about. In the process of looking for them, however, I become aware that while some are quickly discarded, others are eagerly retained – as if I knew instinctively what I am looking for. I then try to find out why such contradictory feelings should manifest themselves so convincingly, and it is in this process that I end up unveiling the characters in my opera. I suspect that the characters that remain have some aspect of me going down that journey, as I imagined it. It is as if I had cheated and stayed on board, but split into many characters and hidden inside them. This is where a librettist comes in.

When I say an opera librettist, what I really mean is a supremely gifted mind reader with endless patience, total flexibility, great literary skills and no ego. They are rare, as you can well imagine. In the scale of human types, they stand at the top, close to saints and martyrs. Their most frequent reply to the composer, however, is far from sainthood: “Why the hell don’t you write it yourself, then?” Many composers do, of course. But since

it was not the case with me, I will talk a little more about this quite inexplicable form of collaboration.

If I put my mind to it, I can certainly understand their feelings. They have to produce a text that hardly stands up by itself – they must trust music they can’t hear. And they can’t hear it simply because it is not composed yet. The composer “knows” the music he will write, so he asks the librettist to write words along those lines. Sometimes the librettist reads the composer’s mind successfully and it is all joy; but then there are times when he is asked to cut this, insert that, get everybody on stage saying something so they can all sing, all different but at the same time, not too short, not too long, No! not that vowel... until “Why the hell don’t you write it yourself, then?” puts an end to the working session.

Writing opera is a work of perseverance. We persevered and eventually found our characters; we found our story too. In the early 1900s, the great opera star Florencia Grimaldi reprises the river journey she made twenty years before with her one true love, the naturalist Cristobal Ribeiro da Silva. Searching for the rarest of butterflies, he mysteriously disappeared into the Amazonian jungle. Her stated mission is to sing at the fabled opera house in remote Manaus, but her secret desire is to find her lover once more.

Florencia Grimaldi, a native of South America who has triumphed all over the world, undertakes the journey that will

bring her back to her origins. It is, I believe, the story of the return journey that we all undertake at a certain point in our lives: *nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*, the moment when we look back at what we once dreamed of becoming, and then confront what we have now become.

The story of Florencia's return journey resonated very loudly within me. So I suspect I should now tell you a little about my childhood and about my musical training. How did I decide to become a composer?

When I was fourteen years old, I left Mexico to go and study in England. I was a reasonable pianist in those days, and taking advantage of the fact that a distant relative lived in London, I decided to go there hoping to become a professional pianist. I completed my school years successfully, though not without a small crisis that felt at the time like the end of the world: the realization that I did not want to become a professional pianist after all, struck me like a slap in the face. I was aghast and did not know how to react, but the message was loud and clear: I was not to go down that path. It was difficult, as you can imagine, to justify a journey that had taken me so far and that seemed to be heading towards a tragic miscarriage.

England, however, was generous to me. It opened my eyes to the infinitely varied world of music, well beyond the confines of the piano. London seemed to me like the center of the music world. I heard *Petroushka* and the *St. Matthew*

Passion, *The Rite of Spring* and Beethoven's String Quartets; I saw operas by Mozart, Wagner, Strauss and a memorable *Oedipus Rex* by Stravinsky at the old Sadler's Wells Theatre that haunts me to this day. There was more to music, much more than just playing the piano. I decided then, not without some trepidation, that I would become a composer. This put an end to one small crisis but set in motion a whole new one.

How do you become a composer? If you want to become, say, an architect or a doctor, there are indications for you to follow, carefully mapped out, at the end of which you become what you have set out to be. Becoming a composer seemed enigmatic by comparison. And reading about the great composers did not help a bit. They all seemed to have been born knowing how to do it. I was obviously not in the same situation. I panicked. I talked to friends. I studied scores of scores. And slowly I came to understand something that has been with me ever since: composing is neither something you are born with, nor learn at some point in your life in order to apply it later; it is a continuous process of discovery and a continuous attempt to express, in musical terms, that most curious activity we engage in so passionately and that we call our lives.

In this sense it is not unlike mastering a language. We don't learn how to speak and then proceed to speak the rest of our lives; we start at some point, no matter which, and slowly get better as we do it. And just as our words are the result of our

interaction with what surrounds us, our music is the reflection of all those experiences we call our lives. Looking at it in this way, there is some truth in saying that one does not learn how to compose, one only gets better at it.

I went to university where I started to get better. I spent six more years in England and then came to the United States to study at Princeton University where I stayed for four years. During that time I became so deeply interested in opera that everything I wrote was somehow directed to that end. I wrote orchestral music, but thought about it as interludes between opera scenes. I wrote chamber music, but heard it as moments of intimacy on stage. And I wrote songs, of course, which exercised my ability to set words to music.

In 1977, after fourteen years of living abroad – exactly half my life – I returned to Mexico, got a job at the Opera House and started to write my first opera. I worked at it during 1978-1979 and in August 1980 it was premiered in Mexico City. Although it was musically quite interesting, the opera as a whole was not. The plot presented the heavy kind of psychological drama that a young composer often goes for, and yet, the characters seemed shallow, their concerns seemed too general and at the same time too personal. The problem, as I now see it, was that the characters were planted too superficially in their world and as a result they did not blossom. They were, in fact, the exact reflection of the composer that imagined them. I was back in Mexico,

writing opera in Spanish, but my characters were not growing out of a fertile soil. They were more like airborne creatures kept alive through vitamin pills.

Of course I do not mean that the opera needed more national or folk elements in order to ground the characters more successfully. The use of these can render an equally superficial result, and frequently a disastrous one. Writing opera in Spanish had to become, for me, much more than just using my country's symbols and its language. I needed to explore the very foundations of opera, the ground from which it emerges, that which it tries to capture and the reasons for which we find it powerful and meaningful.

Opera tries to merge the two most fantastic forms of human expression: poetry and music. The successful merging of the two is for me one of the highest goals of composition. It is not a simple matter, however, the merging of two art forms that are so complete and so perfect in their own separate and individual ways. Opera is not simply music articulated with syllables, neither is it a text delivered in singing mode. Opera has to transcend both its components and create a new form of expression – a new art.

But for the new art to really come alive, the fusion of poetry and music must start at the roots. It is not enough to tie their branches together, for this may end up deforming both beyond recognition. The opera composer must dig deep before he can build his edifice. And digging deep takes him to the

origins of poetry and music, wherein lies the essence of our humanity. Our culture, as I understand it, is the way we deal with that essence, the way we see it and represent it. It is the particular manner in which we come face-to-face with the things we most care about: love and death, fear and loneliness, happiness and passion – the foundations upon which we build our lives. We can see then why opera can be so intensely moving, for it deals precisely with these things.

A crucial point in my development as a composer was the encounter with the poetry of Octavio Paz. In 1984 I completed *Obsidian Butterfly*, a piece for soprano, chorus and orchestra based on Paz's poem of the same name. I was attracted by the dramatic force of this poem and believe it is the immediate force behind my second opera: *Rappaccini's Daughter*, also based on a text by Paz.

In *Obsidian Butterfly* a goddess speaks to us with images of fire. She recalls a remote past, idyllic, continuous in its sense of time, unbroken. She describes the fractured present, angular, nervous, dissonant; she then speaks of the future, and when she does, she whispers. Each time suggests a music of its own. Music, after all, is the sound that time makes as it passes – sometimes it moves slowly and anxiously, at other times fluently, like a waterfall. It can be muffled and somber, and it can glitter.

But the most interesting aspect of the poem is that the extreme worlds the goddess describes are ultimately seen, not as

disconnected and opposed to one another, but as parts of a complex and organic unity. The transition from tragedy to sensuality, for example, is a transformation and not a displacement. The new life emerges from the very wound. But just as tragedy always contains the seed that blooms to life, so the new life retains within itself the wound that leads to death. The words "Die in my lips/Rise from my eyes" form a single and terrifying unit. This vision of the world that Paz's poem presents is what inspired me most during the composition. The piece I composed is a dramatic scene more than a song; it is opera more than *lieder*. An ideal performance should therefore be acted and not merely sung.

Writing *Obsidian Butterfly* enabled me to find my own voice. The poem touched upon my deepest concerns, as well as my oldest memories. It vividly brought back the experience of fracture and solitude as well as that of sensuality, love and transformation. I reached back to those memories; I let those feelings emerge. They came slowly, almost timidly, for they had been buried for centuries. And as I welcomed them back and wrote the music, I could feel their healing effect working upon my soul. I had found my voice because I had found myself. I was ready to start another opera.

Rappaccini's Daughter was to become my second opera. I spoke earlier on about the way I came out of it and entered the Amazon. I shall now go back a little and talk about how I got into it in the first place. I chose this text, also by

Octavio Paz, as the basis of my new opera, because I perceived it as a natural continuation of *Obsidian Butterfly*. Paz's vision remains the same: a garden of fire, a garden of live jewels, where opposites merge into one another. In Rappaccini's world, the slightest alteration can turn a life giving plant into a deadly one.

Life and Death: names, only names!
 When we are born,
 our bodies begin to die,
 When we die,
 they begin to live another way.
 The principle is one and the same;
 the rest is a madness of reflections.
 (Octavio Paz, *Rappaccini's Daughter*)

The beauty of the poetry and the vision behind it fired my imagination. I heard soft melodies in the woodwinds, entering one at a time, twisting, turning, shimmering delicately, like leaves rustling gently in the breeze. Rappaccini hears them, focuses his attention on them and understands the way they relate to one another. He can hear behind their appearance, he can hear beyond them and unravel their secret. After the woodwinds, a new instrument shines through. It is the harp, like a beam of silver light that illuminates it all. It is the source, the foundation of that mysterious harmony. Rappaccini hears it, recognizes it and begins to sing.

Why do I describe Rappaccini's process of understanding in such detail? Because it is exactly what I had to go through in order to write the music. It is also, ideally, what I would like to com-

municate to my audience when they listen to my music. Rappaccini's vision is fascinating indeed. His world is the world of science, and it is through reason and experimentation that he hopes to reach the divine. What he does not understand, however, is the experience of love. He sees it as a human frailty or, at best, as a vehicle indispensable for procreation. He fails to grasp how it relates to life and death. *Rappaccini's Daughter* is important to me precisely because it explores this very issue: the position of love in the scheme of our lives; the meaning it has in the face of the opposites that delimit our existence.

Why are these issues important to me? Am I the type of composer that must hide behind serious issues in order to make his music sound important? I certainly hope not. The issues are simply important to me, to my life, as they are to most people. Writing music is for me a process of self-discovery and self-understanding. I am concerned, especially, with the nature of love. I believe that the experience of love is fleeting, fragile and interminable. I believe it is the only point where life and death intertwine. I believe it is the only moment where time stops and human beings are permitted a taste of immortality. I identify the essence of music with these concerns, and it is through music that I try to capture them and understand them. Above all other art forms, music is privileged when it tries to reach our most intimate feelings. Music always speaks to us with the truth, we do not question it, for we know

that it never lies.

Before I finish my lecture, play you an excerpt from *Rappaccini's Daughter* and show you a short video about *Florecia en el Amazonas*, I would like to talk briefly about the final scenes of both operas. In the first case, Beatriz has reached the end of her life; in the second, Florecia, the end of her journey. At that point, both go through a transformation that I can only describe as a rebirth.

As Beatriz Rappaccini sings her final aria, she sheds the top layer of her dress, a heavy, earthly layer so to speak. She remains in a white, silky underdress that lets her free; thus her image matches the freedom of her voice as it soars and goes through the sky.

I have taken the leap,
I have reached the shore beyond.
Garden of my youth, poisoned paradise,
my tree, my brother, my one lover
Cover me! Restore me to ashes!
Dissolve my bones and my memory...
I am falling, falling inwards,
towards the center,
and I do not touch
the depth of my soul.
(Paz, *Rappaccini's Daughter*)

She collapses at the foot of the tree. Giovanni takes her in his arms. The lights go down slowly; the characters leave without being seen. The human tragedy has passed. All that remains is the garden, which comes alive with dazzling light and color, transforming the tragedy into the only thing capable of redeeming it: everlasting beauty.

Let us now see what happens with Florecia. At the end of her journey, she goes through a similar transformation. As Florecia sings her final aria, her voice, her song and she herself, become intertwined with the image of a butterfly. She breaks through her cocoon and enters her finest moment; her voice soars, her song acquires transparent wings. Love and beauty metamorphose into one another and become indistinguishable from each other.

Hear me, Cristobal
My voice soars toward you
like a bird and spreads its wings
sheltering the world's love
My voice was born in you
from your hands
which asleep or awake
dream of wondrous butterflies.
(Marcela Fuentes-Berain,
Florecia en el Amazonas)

The image of the butterfly, the supremely beautiful moment of its birth, is overtly present at the end of *Florecia*. But it is an image which has been present in many of my works, as you can tell by the way I described Beatriz's final aria. Or perhaps I should say that it has been present in my mind as I composed several of my works. I have asked myself why. I think it is my way of coping with the sadness of separation, my way of transforming it, of understanding the moment when something is no more, like when I finish an opera, and say good-bye to characters that have lived with me for so long and have taught me so much, that

grew out of me so I could be born out of them, that are, in the end, indistinguishable from myself.

At the beginning of this talk I said that we didn't have to start at the beginning; that we would get there eventually. I think we are there; we have come full circle. It has been a return journey - *nel mezzo del cammin* - much like Florencia Grimaldi's: a confrontation.

So when I confront myself in the mirror, I see a Mexican composer who, after many years, has gone back to live in his own country to write operas. During my travels I have thought a great deal about my own culture, about music and about opera. I have searched wherever I could in order to understand them and unravel their mysteries. In the end, I can see it clearly, I've been in search of myself, of my place in the world, of my own voice.

And when I feel extremely courageous and ask whether I have become what I once dreamed of becoming, I try to be kind with myself. I confess that, with all my heart, I'm still trying.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Datar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line above it that extends to the left and then curves down to underline the first part of the name.

Daniel Catán was born in Mexico City on April 3, 1949. He is a graduate in Philosophy from the University of Sussex, England (1970), and studied Music at the University of Southampton. In 1977 he obtained his Ph.D. in Music Composition and Theory from Princeton University. His teachers have included Milton Babbitt, James K. Randall, Benjamin Boretz and Peter Evans.

His most outstanding credits include a *Cantata* for soprano, chorus and chamber orchestra, with text by Saint John of the Cross; *El árbol de la vida* and *En un dobléz del tiempo* for symphony orchestra; *Ausencia de flores*, a ballet commissioned to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Mexican painter, José Clemente Orozco; *Tierra final*, for soprano and orchestra, with text by Jorge Ruiz Dueñas; *Obsidian Butterfly*, for soprano, chorus and orchestra, with text by the Nobel laureate, Octavio Paz; and the opera in two acts, *Rappaccini's Daughter*, with a libretto by Juan Tovar, based on the play by Octavio Paz. When *Rappaccini's Daughter* premiered at the San Diego Opera in 1994, it was the first opera by a Mexican composer ever presented in the United States. The work also took him to Japan where he studied the music of the traditional Japanese arts with particular focus on the combination of music and drama. His third opera, *Florencia en el Amazonas*, with a libretto by Marcela Fuentes-Berain, world-premiered in 1996 at the Houston Grand Opera, and was performed in Los Angeles and Seattle in 1997-98.

Mr. Catán has published numerous articles on music and the arts in Mexico's most prominent literary journals, and his book, *Partitura inacabada (Unfinished Score)*, gathers various essays on music and related topics.

LIST OF COMPOSITIONS

- 1972 *Quintet for oboe, clarinet, violin, cello and piano*; premiered University of Southampton, England, 1972.
- 1975 *Hetaera Esmeralda*, for symphony orchestra; premiered Princeton University, conducted by Bruce Ferden, May 7, 1976.
- 1977 *Ocaso de medianoche*, for mezzosoprano and orchestra; premiered by the Orquesta Sinfónica del Estado de México, conducted by Asher Temkin, October 22, 1979.
- 1979 *Encuentro en el ocaso*, chamber opera in one act; libretto by Carlos Montemayor; premiered at the Teatro de la Ciudad, August 2, 1980. The opera was also performed at the Festival Internacional Cervantino in 1982.
- 1980 *El árbol de la vida*, for symphony orchestra; premiered by the Orquesta Sinfónica del Estado de México, conducted by Bystrik Rezucha, August 22, 1980.
- 1981 *Cantata*, for soprano, mixed choir and chamber ensemble; premiered by the Convivium Musicum, conducted by Daniel Catán, January 30, 1982.
- 1982 *En un doblez del tiempo*, for symphony orchestra; premiered by Sergio Cárdenas with the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional at the Festival de Aguascalientes, August 17, 1982.
- 1982 *Trio for violin, cello, and piano*; premiered by Trío México, Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, October 17, 1983.
- 1982 *El medallón de Mantelillos*, musical play for singers, dancers, actors and chamber orchestra; libretto by Guillermo Sheridan; premiered at the Sala Miguel Covarrubias, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), conducted by Daniel Catán, December 9, 1982.
- 1983 *Ausencia de flores*, ballet in one act, for symphony orchestra; commissioned to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of José Clemente Orozco; premiered in Guadalajara, conducted by Daniel Catán, November 23, 1983.

- 1984 *Mariposa de obsidiana (Obsidian Butterfly)*, for soprano, chorus and orchestra; based on the poem by Octavio Paz; commissioned by the Secretaría de Educación Pública to celebrate the 70th birthday of Octavio Paz; premiered at the Festival Internacional Cervantino, conducted by Francisco Savín, October 20, 1984.
- 1984 *Cuando bailas Leonor*, for flute, oboe, cello and piano; commissioned by the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana; premiered by the Da Capo Quartet, July 13, 1984.
- 1985 *Tierra final*, for soprano and orchestra; poems by Jorge Ruiz Dueñas; commissioned by the UNAM; premiered by Enrique Diemecke, March 7, 1986.
- 1989 *La hija de Rappaccini (Rappaccini's Daughter)*, opera in two acts for full orchestra; libretto by Juan Tovar, based on the play by Octavio Paz; premiered at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City, conducted by Eduardo Diazmuñoz, April 25, 1991.
- 1989 *Encantamiento*, for two recorders, one player; premiered by Horacio Franco, Festival Internacional Cervantino, October 1989.
- 1991 *Tú son tu risa tu sonrisa*, for symphony orchestra; premiered by the Orquesta Sinfónica de la UNAM, conducted by Francisco Savín, March 1992.
- 1991 *Contristada*, song for tenor and orchestra; commissioned by Fernando de la Mora.
- 1994 *El vuelo del águila*, for symphony orchestra; directed by Eduardo Diazmuñoz for the television series "El vuelo del águila."
- 1996 *Florencia en el Amazonas*, opera in two acts for full orchestra; libretto by Marcela Fuentes-Berain; premiered at the Houston Grand Opera, conducted by Vjekoslav Sutej, October 25, 1996.

RECORDINGS

Homenaje a Octavio Paz. La hija de Rappaccini & Mariposa de obsidiana. Tenor: Fernando de la Mora; Soprano: Encarnación Vásquez. Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México, directed by Eduardo Diazmuñoz.

El vuelo del águila. Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México, directed by Eduardo Diazmuñoz.

Música Mexicana para flauta de pico. Horacio Franco.

Música Mexicana para violín, violoncello y piano. Trío México.

Other publications available in the *Encuentros* series:

- *Casas, voces y lenguas de América Latina*. Diálogo con el escritor chileno, José Donoso. *Encuentros* No. 1, Abril de 1993. Re-edición 1996.
- *Cómo empezó la historia de América*. Conferencia del historiador colombiano, Germán Arciniegas. No. 2, Agosto de 1993.
- *Año internacional de los pueblos indígenas*. Conferencia de la líder indígena guatemalteca, Rigoberta Menchú, Premio Nobel de la Paz en 1992. No. 3, Diciembre de 1993.
- *Narrativa paraguaya actual: Dos Vertientes*. Conferencia de la escritora paraguaya, Renée Ferrer. No. 4, Marzo de 1994.
- *El Paraguay en sus artes plásticas*. Conferencia de la historiadora paraguaya, Annick Sanjurjo Casciero. No. 5, Marzo de 1994.
- *El porvenir del drama*. Conferencia del dramaturgo español, Alfonso Sastre. No. 6, Abril de 1994.
- *Dance: from Folk to Classical*. Lecture by the North American dancer and director of the Miami City Ballet, Edward Villella. No. 7, August, 1994.
- *Belize: A Literary Perspective*. Lecture by the Belizean novelist, Zee Edgell. No. 8, September, 1994.
- *El desarrollo de la escultura en la Escuela Quiteña*. Conferencia de la antropóloga ecuatoriana, Magdalena Gallegos de Donoso. No. 9, Octubre de 1994.
- *Art in Context: Aesthetics, Environment, and Function in the Arts of Japan*. Lecture by the North American curator of Japanese Art at the Freer and Sackler Galleries in Washington, D.C., Ann Yonemura. No. 10, March, 1995.
- *Hacia el fin del milenio*. Conferencia del poeta mexicano, Homero Aridjis. No. 11, Setiembre de 1995.
- *Haiti: A Bi-Cultural Experience*. Lecture by the Haitian novelist, Edwidge Danticat. No. 12, December, 1995.

- *The Meanings of the Millennium*. Lecture by the North American theologian from the University of Chicago, Bernard McGinn. No. 13, January, 1996.
- *Milenarismos andinos: originalidad y materialidad (siglos XVI - XVIII)*. Conferencia del sociólogo peruano de la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Manuel Burga. No. 14, Febrero de 1996.
- *Apocalypse in the Andes: Contact Zones and the Struggle for Interpretive Power*. Lecture by the Canadian linguist from Stanford University, Mary Louise Pratt. No. 15, March, 1996.
- *When Strangers Come to Town: Millennial Discourse, Comparison, and the Return of Quetzalcoatl*. Lecture by the North American historian from Princeton University, David Carrasco. No. 16, June, 1996.
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- *El milenio de los pueblos: The Legacy of Juan and Eva Perón*. Lecture by the Argentine sociologist from New York University, Juan E. Corradi. No. 18, November, 1996.
- *Breves apuntes sobre la literatura ecuatoriana y norteamericana*. Conferencia del poeta ecuatoriano, Raúl Pérez Torres. No. 19, Marzo de 1997.
- *Sociedad y poesía: los enmantados*. Conferencia del poeta hondureño, Roberto Sosa. No. 20, Mayo de 1997.
- *Architecture as a Living Process*. Lecture by the Canadian architect, Douglas Cardinal, whose projects include Washington, D.C.'s National Museum of the American Indian. No. 21, July, 1997.
- *Composing Opera: A Backstage Visit to the Composer's Workshop*. Lecture by the Mexican composer, Daniel Catán, whose operas include *Rappaccini's Daughter* and *Florencia en el Amazonas*. No. 22, August, 1997. (Spanish version available.)

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